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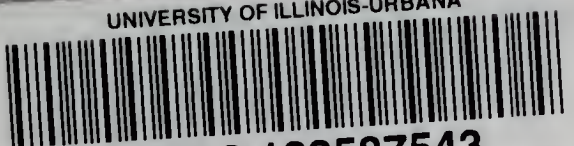


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# Self Protection

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# SAFEGUARDS YOU CAN TAKE:

## For Personal Security

- Walk only on well-lighted, well-traveled streets. Avoid parks, dark parking lots and construction areas after dark.
- Walk near the curb rather than near buildings, alleys or shrubbery.
- Always have your keys in your hand before exiting a building and going to your car and before entering your home. Avoid searching for keys and be prepared.
- If you believe you are being followed as you walk, turn around and look. If you are in danger, you can prepare to deal with it.
- If, while you are walking, you become threatened by someone in a car, run in a direction opposite to the way the car is traveling. In the time it takes the car to turn around, you can be gone.
- When walking, do not carry a purse by the handle or strap. Keep it close to your body.
- Never leave a purse lying on a counter or in a shopping cart. Always keep closures fastened.

## For Home Security

- Have your keys in your hand, both to and from your home or car. Keep the key you intend to use poised in a position so it could be used as a weapon. Know which way your key goes into the lock.
- Carry a whistle in your hand or around your wrist. Use it if you feel threatened.

- Do not allow anyone to follow you into your building. Just because the person is holding a key, it does not mean the key fits the door to your building.
- If you are hesitant about entering an elevator with a stranger, wait for the next elevator. When in the elevator, stand close to the control panel and know where the alarm is located.
- If you find evidence that an intruder has entered your home, DO NOT ENTER. Call police immediately from a nearby house.
- Use strong locks on every door of your home, and a chain lock or peephole on all windowless doors.
- Never open your door until you know who is standing on the other side. Repair or delivery persons can be identified by their identification cards and by calling their places of employment.
- Do not give personal information to strangers over the phone, or let the caller know that you are home alone.
- If you receive a “wrong number” call, never disclose your phone number or name. Ask what number the caller is trying to reach and instruct the caller to dial again.
- If you receive an obscene phone call, hang up immediately and notify the police. If calls persist, keep a whistle near the phone. At the next obscene call, blow the whistle loudly into the mouthpiece.
- Do not go to the basement laundry room alone. Do your laundry with a friend.
- Inform your baby-sitter of all precautionary rules you follow. Insist, for the safety of the baby-sitter and your children, that these rules be followed in your absence.

- Do not put your first name on your mailbox or in the telephone directory. Use your first name initial.

## When Driving

- Check for someone under your car while approaching and always check the back seat of your car for intruders before entering.
- To prevent carjacking, lock all doors and keep windows closed, even when driving.
- When stopped in traffic, leave enough space between your car and the car ahead for quick departure.
- While driving, stay in the center lane; avoid being blocked into the curb lane.
- When traveling through high crime areas, take expressways, if available, rather than secluded streets.
- If you are being followed in a car, do not drive home. Drive to a police, fire or gas station, or any other well-lighted area. Remember your horn is a good alarm.
- If another driver bumps your vehicle, do not stop. Either drive to a well-traveled area to inspect the damage or attempt to get the vehicle's license plate number and report it immediately to the police.
- If you are being stopped by law enforcement and you question the authenticity of the stop—slow down, turn on your flashers and proceed to the first available, well lit, populated area.
- Cellular phones can be useful in emergency situations. Always use caution while using your phone. When driving, if possible, pull over and stop before dialing for help.

## Confrontation

**YOUR BEST DEFENSE AGAINST ATTACK IS AWARENESS. REMAIN ALERT AND AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS.**

Fighting for your safety may be necessary. However, if you start out fighting you cancel any other options that might be open to you. Since many attacks are not sexually motivated, and are designed to degrade and humiliate, talking your way out of it may be easier.

Use of a firearm to protect yourself or property is not recommended.

- Guns stolen from residences are a primary way of getting guns into the hands of criminals.
- Half of all the persons that fire a gun trying to protect themselves shoot someone they do not want to, i.e. friends, neighbors, relatives, etc.
- Be aware of those times and places where there is a potential for attack and be prepared to defend yourself.
- Articles commonly carried that make useful defense weapons: nail file, rat tail comb, pens, pencils, keys or anything rigid.
- Concentrate on these areas only when combating an assailant: groin, eyes, ears, nose, throat.
- You should not swing at an assailant. Roundhouse or overhand blows are easy to deflect or evade.
- Your movements should be made with all your strength, and should be straight jabs.
- Remember that screaming may be just as important to your defense as any weapon.

**The methods below are particularly important if your assailant has a gun or knife, or there is more than one attacker. (Fighting would probably be futile.)**

- There is documentation of assailants that left would-be-victims alone after they said they were pregnant and it would kill their baby. (Some cases were women that were too old to even have a baby.)
- Telling an attacker that you have VD or AIDS can discourage the attacker.
- It may sound disgusting, but putting your fingers into your throat and making yourself vomit usually gets results. (This method is not often used except as a last resort.)

Use your imagination and you can think of others.

## **IN SPITE OF YOUR PRECAUTIONS, WHAT IF YOU ARE SEXUALLY ASSAULTED?**

Sexual assault convictions are low; however, they are no more difficult to prosecute than other crimes if certain guidelines are followed.

- Notify a law enforcement agency immediately!!
- Do not wash, douche, change or throw away your clothes.
- Do not remove anything from the scene of the attack.
- Go to the nearest hospital for an examination. At the hospital have any necessary medical exams. Inform the doctor of the exact acts committed upon you and have the doctor note any medical evidence of them. Semen smears must be taken from the vagina and/or anus. The doctor should note any bruises or injuries, external or internal.

- Inform the police of all details of the attack, however intimate, and of anything unusual you may have noticed about the attacker.
- Show police any external bruises or injuries, however minor, resulting from the attack. Show the injuries to a friend or relative who might be available as a corroborative witness at the trial.
- Give your undergarments to the police for semen analysis, along with any torn or stained clothing.
- Make note of events of the attack, unusual details, etc., for yourself in case of a trial.
- Contact sexual assault counseling services in your area that can help you during this period of trauma.

## Separating the myths from the facts

***A person can not be sexually assaulted if he/she does not want to be.***

Physical force is used in 85% of all reported sexual assaults.

***A person who is sexually assaulted must have asked for it.***

Only 4% of reported sexual assaults involve precipitative behavior on the part of the victim. (F.B.I.)

***Most sexual assaults occur in dark alleys or to persons who hitchhike.***

Over 1/3 are committed by an attacker who forces their way into the victims home. Over 50% occur in a residence.

***The typical sex offender is a stranger to the victim.***

80% of the sex offenders are relatives, friends, neighbors or acquaintances of the victim.

*Sex offenders are sexually unfulfilled.*

60% of them are married and lead normal, happy sexual lives. Most sex offenders have normal sexual relationships.

*A sex offender gets carried away by a sudden uncontrollable surge of desire.*

90% of group sexual assaults are planned in advance, while 58% of sexual assaults committed by an individual are planned.

## **USE THIS INFORMATION TO IDENTIFY YOUR ASSAILANT**

Information should be reported to the police  
**IMMEDIATELY!**

Height \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Hair color \_\_\_\_\_

Eye color \_\_\_\_\_ Race \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Describe clothing \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Distinct marks or scars (tattoos) \_\_\_\_\_

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To schedule a Self Protection program for your school or group please contact the Safety Education Unit office at (217) 524-2525 or contact your Illinois State Police District Headquarters.

